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REMINISCENCES OF EARLY TEXANS.

A COLLECTION FROM THE AUSTIN PAPERS.

J. H. KUYKENDALL.

I.

[In 1857 J. H. Kuykendall wrote for Judge Bell, of Columbia, a series of papers, consisting of his recollections of various persons and episodes of early Texas. He himself had played an active part in the life of Austin's colony both before and during the revolution, and was, therefore, well qualified for his task. From Judge Bell, the papers passed into the hands of Hon. Guy M. Bryan and were deposited by him among the Austin Papers, where they now are. Kuykendall's letter of transmittal to Judge Bell, written on the fly leaf of the book containing the reminiscences, explains his method of presentation:

"Judge Bell,

"Columbia, Texas.

"Dear Sir,

"In the following "Recollections" you will doubtless find some chaff; but *some* appeared to me necessary as a vehicle for the grain. I would like to add another paper or two (which are nearly ready) hereto, but fearing you may be impatient to receive something from me, I omit them until my next. In a couple of months (making seven months instead of twelve) I will have done all I expect to do in this business. Indeed, by that time, but little *new material* or much interest, in regard to colonial times, will be left to collect. Please acknowledge the receipt hereof. My Post Office is "Round Top, Fayette Co., Tex.

"Truly yours,

"J. H. K.

"Aug. 26th, 1857."]

1. *Recollections of Capt. Horatio Chriesman.*

(Born in Virginia, Aug. 13, 1797.)

Captain Horatio Chriesman left the State of Missouri for Texas in the spring of 1822. At New Orleans he embarked on the *Schr. Only Son* which landed him and many other immigrants at the mouth of the Colorado river on the fourth day of June 1822. As several cases of sickness occurred amongst the immigrants soon after their debarkation, all the families retired, as soon [as] practicable, further inland, leaving most of their effects at the land-

ing in charge of four men. Captain Chriesman, his father-in-law William Kincheloe, and a few others with their families, camped at a little creek about ten miles north of the landing. A few other families, constituting what was called "Wilson's party" also proceeded about ten miles from the landing and camped on a branch of the Trespalacios—westward from Kincheloe's party.

The remainder of the immigrants went to Jennings's camp, farther up the Colorado.— After the lapse of a few days, the provisions at Kincheloe's camp being nearly exhausted, Mr. Pruitt was about to start to the landing for a new supply, when a runner from Wilson's camp came to inform them that the four men left at the landing had been murdered by the Carancawas and all the property of the immigrants carried away or destroyed. Immediately after the receipt of this news, Kincheloe's partly left their camp and proceeded up the Colorado—the men packing all the effects of themselves and families except the guns, which were carried by the women. All these immigrants settled at different points on the Colorado. They suffered greatly for want of provisions.

Having lost his wife, Captain Chriesman determined to take his little son to Missouri and place him in the care of his mother. Having purchased a pony, he started on his journey the 23d day of February 1823. Two days afterwards he arrived at the cabin of Martin Varner at Hickory Point, near the present town of Independence. Here he was taken sick and was unable to travel for five or six weeks, by which time he had declined going to Missouri, and undertook, in conjunction with Samuel Kennedy, to cultivate Mr. Varner's small farm. Chriesman and Kennedy were to work the crop and Varner was to furnish the provisions, *id est*,—lean venison.¹ Sometime during the summer Varner's horses were stolen by a party of Mexicans. Varner and Kennedy pursued and were absent several days, during which time Varner's family had nothing to sustain life withal but a little milk (Varner had but two cows). "We had" says Capt. Chriesman ["]about eight acres of corn which if not worked immediately was certain to be lost. I could not stop the plough to hunt. I took no sustenance save a few stinted drinks of buttermilk until after I finished ploughing

¹The deer were so poor that some of the settlers preferred the meat of the wild horse; but Capt. C. had a prejudice against equine flesh and never ate any.

over the eight acres. My plough animal was an old, slow, blind mule."

A few weeks afterwards Capt. Chriesman was at the house of a neighbor²—Mr Byrd—who resided about five miles below the present town of Washington, and whilst there Mrs. Byrd (now Mrs. Gray) informed him that Mr. James Whiteside—whose residence was on the Navasota, on the east side of the Brazos—had gone to the United States on business, and that his family consisting of his wife and two little boys, had little or nothing to eat but lettuce. Mrs. Byrd expressed much sympathy for Mrs. Whiteside but said she was unable to relieve her, her own family being nearly destitute of provisions. Chriesman went home and told Varner of Mrs. Whiteside's condition. Varner, who was an excellent hunter and a kind hearted man, instantly shouldered his rifle and went into the woods. In a short time he returned with a very large buck, which Capt. C. threw on his horse and carried to Mrs Whiteside—a distance of twenty miles. "Aunt Betsey," says Capt Chriesman, "never forgot this favor."

During this summer Capt. C. was without a shirt, and wore a buckskin hunting shirt instead.— Towards autumn he learned that Col. Groce had some goods. He therefore visited the Col. to replenish his wardrobe. He bought a few yards of coarse, brown Hollands—"Of this linen" says the captain "Mrs. Byrd made me two shirts, the best I ever wore, as they lasted nearly three years." In the fall of 1823 Col. Austin wrote to Chriesman from the Colorado to employ him as a surveyor. He accepted the appointment and followed the business for several years. About the same time Seth Ingram and Selkirk were also appointed surveyors. The first survey made by Capt Chriesman in the Colony was a league of land¹ for Josiah H. Bell on the west side of the Brazos a few miles below the Labahia road. This work was done on the tenth day of October 1823. Ingram's first survey was made for Sylvanus Castleman on the west side of the Colorado above LaGrange. After making a few more surveys above and below the Labahia road, Capt. Chriesman went lower down the Brazos to work.

In the summer of 1824 Capt Chriesman commanded a company under Austin in his expedition to Goliad in quest of the Caranca-

²This "neighbor" resided twelve miles from Mr. Varner.

¹Title for this league was issued to William Gates.

was. Early in the ensuing autumn he went on another fruitless trip in quest of these Indians. As he was returning homeward he learned at Mr. Kincheloe's on the Colorado, that a company had started from that neighborhood the day previous to chastise the Indians who had seized White's boat at the mouth of the Colorado.¹ Chriesman and his companion—Andrew Castleman—at once determined, if possible, to overtake the company in time to be in the fight. This they barely effected. Capt. Chriesman's account of this fight differs in one particular from that contained in the sketch of Capt. Ingram. Capt. Chriesman asserts confidently that there were but nine Indians in the canoe—seven of whom were killed in the river and two reached the opposite shore—one of whom was mortally wounded. He does not remember who commanded the whites— In fact, he as well as Capt. Ingram doubts whether there *was* any recognized commander. (Yoacum gives the command to Capt. Jesse Burnham.)

Late in the autumn of this year Capt. Chriesman while surveying on the east side of the Bernard (a little north of West from McNeil's), had an adventure with the Carancawas. He was meandering the the Bernard (which at that point is two hundred yards wide), and had two chain-carriers with him. His three remaining hands were in a canoe proceeding down the river with the arms, provisions and camp equipage of the party. Chriesman and the chain-carriers heard dogs barking below them—which led them to suspect that there were Indians about, and they had not proceeded far when they discovered four or five large canoes—all crowded with Indians—moving slowly up the stream. Leaving the chain stretched on the ground, Chriesman and his hands ran up the river and intercepted their canoe. As three of the party were unarmed Capt C. deemed it prudent to discontinue surveying until the Indians should be driven away. He accordingly left his canoe in the river and proceeded with his party to the residence of Mr. Josiah H. Bell near the present town of Columbia. When he arrived at Mr. Bell's he found there Col. Austin, James Jones, and four or five other men—all of whom had just arrived from San Felipe and the Fort (Fort Bend) and who immediately volunteered to return with Captain Chriesman and assist him to search for the

¹See sketch of Capt. John Ingram. [This sketch will be reproduced in a later installment of the reminiscences. —EDITOR QUARTERLY.]

Indians. The party now numbered from twelve to fifteen men. When they arrived at the point where Capt. Chriesman had left his canoe, Col. Austin with five or six men embarked on a boat belonging to Mr. Bell (taken thither for the purpose) and rowed slowly down the stream to look for the Indians. Two or three of the men remained at the camp on the bank of the Bernard and two or three accompanied Captain Chriesman down the river to recover his chain which was found without trouble and the party had commenced their return to camp when they heard, a few hundred yards above them, the reports of several guns in rapid succession. They quickened their pace, apprehending that the men at the camp were engaged with the Indians.

They had proceeded but a short distance when they discovered two or three squaws running from the direction of the river. One of the party fired at them before he was aware of their sex. One of the squaws was so frightened that she could scarcely run, and Captain Chriesman determined to make her a prisoner. Just as he reached forth his hand to seize her she fell down and Captain Chriesman left her alone—for he discovered a male Indian in a thicket with his bow raised to shoot him. The Indian disappeared in the thicket before the Capt. could draw a bead on him—but Sterling McNeil fired at him—probably without effect.

When Chriesman and his party arrived at the camp they ascertained that the firing had been below and had doubtless proceeded from Austin's party—which soon afterwards returned and related that they were moving silently down the stream close to the left shore when they suddenly found themselves within a few yards of a large camp of Carancawas, upon which they instantly fired. The Indians were completely surprised and fled into the bottom without returning the fire. The blood on their trail indicated that several of them had been wounded. All their canoes (four or five) were captured. The company remained the ensuing night on the bank of the Bernard. The Indians, who had been dispersed in every direction, were howling through the bottom until a late hour. They all got together and left the Bernard before day. Next morning every man in the company was gratified to find that a small child which the Indians had run off and left at their camp when fired on by Austin's party, had, during the night been recovered and carried away.

Captain Chriesman while surveying never met with these Indians but one other time. This happened on Oyster creek. He had run a line through a canebrake to the bank of the creek and was establishing the corner when two Carancawas made their appearance on the opposite side of the stream. As Capt. C. and his chain-carriers were unarmed they thanked their stars that the broad bayou lay between them and the anthropophagi.

Captain Chriesman commanded a company in the campaign against the Wacoos and Tawacanies conducted by Capt. A. C. Buckner in May and June 1826.¹ The other captains of companies were Ross Alley, William Hall and Bartlett Sims. Near the close of the same year he commanded a company in the expedition against the Fredonians, who dispersed before the forces from the colony reached the Trinity and the colonial militia were permitted to return home. In the year 1832 Capt. C. moved his residence to the capital of the colony (San Felipe) having been elected Constitutional Alcalde for that year.

2. *Recollections of Joel W. Robinson.*²

I was born in Washington county, Georgia, in the year 1815. My father, Judge John G. Robinson immigrated to Texas with his family in the year 1831. He at first settled within the present limits of Brazoria county, where he resided a few months. Both my father and myself were engaged in the attack on the Mexican Fort at Velasco in June 1832. Not long afterwards we removed to Mill Creek within the present bounds of Austin county and subsequently to Cummins's creek, a few miles east of the Colorado. I had, from boyhood, a strong predilection for adventure which my father afforded me every facility in his power to gratify, and for three or four years, much, perhaps most, of my time was devoted to the defense of our frontiers against the Indians and Mexicans. I will briefly allude to the principal conflicts in which I was engaged. I was a member of a company of about thirty men, which in May 1835 went to attack the Keechi village on Boggy

¹See *Recollections of Capt. G. Kuykendall*. [These will be printed in a later installment.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.]

²This name should be Robison. Mr. Neal Robison, tax collector of Fayette county, son of Joel W. Robison, says that the family have always so spelled it.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.

creek—a tributary to the Trinity river. When we got near the village some of the Indians met us in a friendly manner. We charged them with stealing horses from the whites which accusation they denied and to prove that they were at a good understanding with the settlers in Robinson's [Robertson's] colony they exhibited a treaty with them signed by the Empresario, Sterling C. Robertson. We were about to depart without molesting them when some of our men in looking about the village, saw, and recognized several horses which had been stolen from the settlements on the Colorado. Finding they were detected the Keechies seized their arms. We fired on them and they took refuge in a thicket contiguous to the village. We knew not what loss the Indians sustained. None of our men were injured. We immediately collected about thirty head of horses and started homeward. As we expected the Indians would pursue us and make an effort to recover their horses, a strong guard was placed around our camp the ensuing night. At a late hour one of our sentinels fired off his gun and ran into the camp crying "Indians!" The night was unusually dark, and the men, suddenly roused from sleep mistook one another for the enemy. Some clubbed their rifles and knocked down their messmates. Several shots were also fired and one man (Benjamin Castleman) was killed and another wounded before the mistake was discovered. I think it probable that the sentinel really saw Indians, but they did not molest us. We returned home without further mishap.¹ Both Major Oldham and Capt. John York claimed the command of this company and were constantly quarreling about it, but neither of them was ever fully recognized as such by the men.

Difficulties with the Mexicans commenced about the close of this summer (1835) and I was among the very first who repaired to the field of strife. This was about the last of August or first of September, and I did not return home until after the surrender of Bexar to our arms in December of that same year. I was engaged in the sharp conflict at the Mission of Conception, 28th Oct. I

¹In a later paper of the same collection is found the following note: "In the recollections of Joel W. Robinson, in the account of the attack on the Keechi tribe in 1835, it should have been stated that two of the Indians were killed—after which their village was burned. Papers were found in the village which were known to have been on the person of a young man named Edwards who was killed by Indians 20 miles below Bastrop, a few months previously."

was also in what is known as the "grass-fight" and fully participated in the storming of the town of San Antonio de Bexar. After my return home I had but a few weeks respite from the toils of war. The wave of Mexican invasion was rolling towards our frontier. The time had arrived that *really* "tried men's souls." Our next campaign opened the first of March 1836. During this campaign I was a private in Capt. Heard's company of the first Regiment, (Burleson's), and fought in the battle of San Jacinto. As a true account of the capture of Santa Anna has probably never been published I will here relate the particulars.

I was one of a detachment of thirty or forty men commanded by Col. Burleson, which left the encampment of the Texas Army at sunrise of the morning after the battle, to pursue the fugitive enemy. Most of us were mounted on horses captured from the Mexicans. We picked up two or three cringing wretches before we reached Vince's Bayou (8 or 9 miles from our camp). Col. Burleson gave them a few lines in pencil stating that they had been made prisoners by him, and sent them back to our camp without a guard.¹ When we got within about two miles of Vince's bayou we discovered, some distance to our left, five or six mounted men coming from towards the head of the bayou. Supposing them to be Mexicans we rode towards them, and they fled. We pursued and chased them to Vince's bayou, below the road, where they dismounted and went into a thicket. When we got to their horses we found that they were caparisoned in American, or rather, Texian, style, and some of the horses were American. Inferring from these circumstances that the riders were our countrymen we called to them and they quickly came out of the thicket. It proved to be Doctor Phelps and others on their way to our army. They had mistaken us for Mexicans, as we had mistaken them. Phelps and his little party proceeded on towards our army. Col. Burleson with the greater part of the detachment went up Vince's bayou—but six of us, to wit, Sylvester, Miles, Vermillion, Thompson, another man whose name I have forgotten, and myself, proceeded a short distance farther down the Bayou, but not finding any Mexicans we turned our course towards our camp. About two miles east of Vince's Bayou, the road leading from the bridge to the battle-

¹This was obviously to afford them protection from straggling Texans.—
EDITOR QUARTERLY.

ground, crossed a ravine a short distance below its source. This ravine extends to Buffalo Bayou. Along its course, between the road and Buffalo bayou are or *were*, several small groves or motts with considerable space of prairie between them. As we approached this ravine we discovered a man standing in the prairie near one of the groves. When we got near him he sat down on a small bundle, but ere we quite reached him he rose up and stood again. He was dressed in citizens clothing, to wit, blue cottonade, (frock) coat and pantaloons. I was the only one of our party who spoke any Spanish. I asked the prisoner various questions which he answered readily. In reply to the question whether he knew where Santa Anna and Cos were, he said he presumed they had gone to the Brazos. He said he was not aware that there were any of his countrymen concealed near him, but said there *might* be in the thicket along the ravine.

Miles mounted the prisoner on his horse and walked as far as the road—about a mile.— Here he ordered the prisoner to dismount, which he did with great reluctance. He walked slowly and apparently with pain. Miles, who was a rough, reckless fellow, was carrying a Mexican lance which he had picked up during the morning, with which weapon he occasionally slightly pricked the prisoner to accelerate his pace—which sometimes amounted to a *trot*. At length he stopped and begged permission to ride—saying that he belonged to the cavalry and was unaccustomed to walking. We paused and deliberated as to what should be done with him. I asked him if he would go on to our army if left behind to travel at his leisure. He replied that he would. Miles insisted that the prisoner should be left behind—but said if he *were* left that he would kill him. He urged the rest of us to proceed on, saying “*I will stay with him.*” At length my compassion for the prisoner moved me to mount him behind me. I also took charge of his bundle. He was disposed to converse and as we rode along, asked me many questions, the first of which was “Did General Houston command in person in the action of yesterday?” He also asked how many prisoners we had taken and what we were going to do with them— When, in answer to an inquiry, I informed him that the Texian force in the battle of the preceding day was less than eight hundred men, he said I was surely mistaken—that our force was certainly much greater. In turn, I plied the prisoner with

divers questions. I remember asking him why he came to Texas to fight against us, to which he replied that he was a private soldier, and was bound to obey his officers. I asked him if he had a family. He replied in the affirmative, and when I enquired "Do you expect to see them again?" his only answer was a shrug of the shoulders.

We rode to that part of our camp where the prisoners were kept in order to deliver our trooper to the guard. What was our astonishment, as we approached the guard, to hear the prisoners exclaiming "El Presidente! el Presidente!" by which we were made aware that we had unwittingly captured the "Napoleon of the South." The news spread almost instantaneously through our camp and we had scarcely dismounted ere we were surrounded by an excited crowd. Some of our officers immediately took charge of the illustrious captive and conducted him to the tent of Genl. Houston.

I remained in possession of the bundle and after I went to my company I opened it. It consisted of an inferior Mexican blanket, a white linen sheet, a fine grey cloth vest with gold buttons and a Mexican bottle-gourd (guage). I afterward called on Santa Anna and offered to restore the bundle but he declined receiving it, and expressed himself very grateful for the kindness I had shown him.

After the rank of our prisoner became known I reviewed all the circumstances of his flight and capture and arrived at the conclusion that, contrary to the opinion since generally entertained, he did not reach the crossing of Vince's bayou, nor Vince's Bayou at any point. It is true that the horse upon which he fled was found near the bridge, within less than one hundred and fifty yards of Vince's house; but this fact is no evidence that the rider went that far. The horse (a fine black stallion belonging to Mr. Vince and taken from his stable by [by] the Mexicans a few days before) if abandoned by his rider even at the distance of many miles from Vince's would very naturally have gone thither and been found near his stable.

Nor is it reasonable to suppose that Santa Anna after arriving at the Bayou and finding the bridge destroyed would have liberated his horse and walked *back* nearly two miles, across an open prairie to conceal himself.— The fugitive Mexicans on the evening of the battle were closely pursued and many were cut down by our cavalry, and I doubt not that when Santa Anna arrived at the ravine before

described, he abandoned his horse and concealed himself in the nearest thicket.

It is worthy of remark that Santa Anna was less crouching than other Mexicans in whose capture I had assisted. His complexion was rather fairer than was common among the Mexican soldiers, which, together with his manners led me to suppose that he was a Frenchman. This supposition the more readily occurred to me from the circumstance that a Frenchman in the Mexican service had been made prisoner near our camp the day before the battle.

My father was a member of the first Congress of the Republic of Texas which convened at Columbia in the autumn of 1836. During the session he bought some groceries and sent them to the house of Mr. Stevens who resided about five miles south of my father and within the present limits of Fayette County. In February 1837—shortly after he returned from Columbia, my father went down to Mr. Stevens's with his cart to bring home his groceries. He was accompanied by his brother, Walter Robinson—who was quite a youth. They went with the intention of staying all night with Mr. Stevens. At that time I was at my fathers on a visit—my residence being at Washington on the Brazos. Very early in the morning after my father left home, I started down to Mr. Breeden's (he resided on Cummins's creek about eight miles below my father) purposing to go thence to Washington. When I arrived at Mr. Breeden's, I learned that the night before the Indians had stolen all his horses. Knowing Knowing [*sic*] that my father and uncle intended starting home early that morning and that they were unarmed, I was instantly seized with a presentiment that the Indians would fall in with and murder them. I returned as speedily as possible to my mother and told her the news. She was very uneasy. It was now about noon. I armed myself and proceeded on the road towards Stevens's. I had scarcely gone a mile, when, in the open post oak woods, I found my father's cart and oxen standing in the road. The groceries were also in the cart. But neither father nor uncle was there. I had now no doubt of their fate. The conviction that they were murdered shot into my heart like a thunder bolt. Riding on a few yards farther I discovered buzzards collecting near the road. My approach scared them away and revealed to my sight the body of my father, nude, scalped and

mutilated! I dismounted and sat down by the body. After recovering a little from the shock I looked around for my uncle. I found his body, also stripped scalped and mangled, about fifty yards from my father's remains. His body was small and light and I carried it and laid it by the side of my father's. The vultures, in black groups, were perched on the trees around, and I knew they would quickly devour the bodies if I left them exposed. I covered them with my coat and saddle-blanket and piled brush upon them. I then hurried back with the woful news to my aged mother. There were between thirty and forty of these Indians. Circumstances placed it out of my power to pursue them. A few days after they murdered my father and uncle, it was ascertained that on the very same day, after going about twenty miles, they killed Mr. Gotier and his wife and carried three of their children into captivity. These children were afterwards recovered.

3. *Recollections of Judge Thomas M. Duke.*

(Born in Kentucky, 1795.)

Judge Duke was born in the State of Kentucky in the year 1795. In his youth he served a campaign under General Harrison and was in the battle of the Thames. He is one of many engaged in that battle who assert that Dick Johnson did *not* kill Tecumseh. Judge Duke left N. Orleans for Texas on board the *Schr. Lively* in May or June 1822. The *Lively* was wrecked on the west end of Galveston Island, whence the immigrants were taken by the Schooner *John Motley* and landed at the mouth of the Colorado in June 1822. Thence the immigrants proceeded a few miles further up the Colorado to "Jenning's camp." Judge D. continued on up to the settlement near the locality of the present town of Columbus.

The immigrants left most of their provisions and other property at the landing in charge of three men, who were shortly afterwards murdered by the Carancawas, who carried away or destroyed all the goods belonging to the settlers. This was the first outbreak of these Indians. Not long after this J. C. Clark, ———, and another man, were coming up the Colorado from Kincheloe's cane-brake in a pirogue laden with corn, when they were attacked by the Carancawas. Allen and the man whose name is forgotten were

killed. Clark was severely wounded but escaped. Shortly afterwards Robert Kuykendall headed a party of settlers in an attack on the Carancawas at the mouth of Scull creek where the Indians were defeated with considerable loss. In December 1822 the Baron de Bastrop arrived at the upper settlement on the Colorado with authority to organize the colony. The settlers convened near the locality of the present town of Columbus where they took the oath of allegiance to the Emperor Iturbide and held an election for civil and militia officers which resulted in the choice of John Tomlinson for Alcalde, Robt. Kuykendall for Captain, ——— Jackson for first and Moses Morrison for second Lieutenant. The whole number of voters then on the Colorado did not exceed thirty. Judge Duke acted as secretary for the Baron de Bastrop in effecting this organization. The Baron did not proceed as far as the Brazos, as he had intended but authorized Josiah H. Bell to organize the colonists on that river. Bastrop went back to San Antonio but returned to the colony again in 1823 as commissioner to extend titles to the colonists— but his health became impaired, and he soon afterwards returned again to San Antonio. He was subsequently a delegate to the State Congress of Coahuila and Texas and Judge D. thinks he died at San Antonio in the year 1826.¹ When the Baron first came to Austin colony D. thinks he was nearly eighty years of age, but very hale and active. He was says Judge Duke, a native of Holland, but at an early age went into the service of Frederic the Great of Prussia. He soon distinguished himself and was ennobled by Frederic. At a later period he received from the King of Spain a large grant of land in Louisiana; but after the acquisition of that territory by the United States he could not sustain his claim. He thought that great injustice had been done him and always spoke in bitter terms of the United States Government. He always signed his name "El Baron de Bastrop." Judge Duke never learned his family name.²

In consequence of repeated thefts committed by the Wacoes and Tawacanies, Austin, in July 1824, sent Captain Aylett C. Buck-

¹Thrall (*A Pictorial History of Texas*, 498) says that he represented Texas in the Legislature in 1824 and in 1827, and that he died in 1828 or 1829.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.

²Thrall gives his name as P. N. Tut, and quotes Sancedo, who calls him Felipe Henrique Neri.—EDITOR QUARTERLY.

ner to make a treaty with them. Judge Duke, James Baird, Thomas H. Borden, Selkirk, ——— Jones and McCrosky, accompanied Buckner on this mission. They took with them some goods to barter with the Indians for horses. They crossed the Brazos at the San Antonio road and proceeded up the river on the east side to the Tawacanie village—thence they crossed over to the Waco village—the site of the present town of Waco. They were well received by the Indians who had recently returned from their summer buffalo-hunt and were feasting on buffalo meat, green corn and beans. They had also pumpkins and melons. They dwelt in comfortable lodges, conical in shape, the frames of which were of cedar poles or slats and thatched with grass. The largest of these lodges (their council-house), was fifty nine paces in circumference. The Wacoes and Tawacanies spoke the same language, and were essentially the same people. Judge D. thinks the two tribes could then number between two and three hundred warriors. They smoked the pipe of peace with the embassy and pledged themselves to peace and amity with the colonists. They had a great number of horses and mules. A small plug of tobacco was the price of a horse & a plug and a half that of a mule.

The embassy remained between two or [and] three weeks with the Indians and returned home by the same route they went out.

“In the year 1819” says Judge Duke “I was at Natchitoches where I formed the acquaintance of a man of the name of Scamp, who had traded with the Comanches. He informed me that he and others had, a year or two previously, obtained in the Comanche country a mass of metal weighing more than half a ton and which they believed to be platinum. They took it to New Orleans to have it tested, but not succeeding to their satisfaction they sent it to Europe for that purpose, but never heard of it again. During this expedition to the Wacoes and Tawacanies I related this story, to my companions and it resulted in our projecting an expedition the ensuing autumn towards the head of the Brazos, for the purpose of bringing away another mass of the supposed precious metal much larger than that just described. A man by the name of McWilliams, an old Comanche trader, then living on the Brazos near the San Antonio road, had stated that he had seen this metallic mass and could find it again. He also stated that the Comanches regarded it as sacred and even worshipped it. A god of plati-

num seemed worthy of *our* homage also, and we were determined to brave almost any danger to obtain it. We had an interview with McWilliams who agreed to conduct us to the hallowed deposit; but our golden visions were soon afterwards dissipated by the death of McWilliams. (May not this mineral body be identical with that said to have been obtained by Major Neighbors a year or two since on the Upper Brazos, and which has been pronounced an aerolite or meteoric stone?—K.)

Judge Duke was with Capt. Randall Jones in his fight with the Cokes in Gulf Prairie in Sept. 1824. His account of which differs little from that which has been published. Sometime during the same year he was one of a small party who were looking for Indians in the Colorado bottom; when they came upon a man and woman at their camp. They were Carancawas, and as they did not run on their approach the party resolved to make them prisoners. Capt. Robert Kuykendall was about to seize the squaw when she ran; the man also ran but did not get far as he was shot down by Daniel Rawls. Kuykendall, a man of extraordinary fleetness, pursued the squaw. She leaped across a deep ravine. With much difficulty Kuykendall performed the same feat and continued in pursuit some distance further; but the squaw effected her escape. It is Judge Duke's opinion that the Carancawas in 1822 could count between two and three hundred warriors. In this estimate he includes the Cokes and Cohannies—who were, in fact, but fragments of the Carancawa tribe.

In the year 1826 Buckner defeated a party of Carancawas below Elliott's crossing. In the winter of 1826 the families of Flowers and Cavanagh were murdered by the Carancawas. Capt. Buckner pursued them with a company. He found the Indians camped in a *mot* on the bay, about three miles east of the present town of Matagorda. He surprised them at daybreak and completely routed [them]—killing about thirty. This was the greatest loss these Indians ever sustained in any one fight with the Colonists.

In the year 1828 Judge Duke was elected first constitutional Alcalde of Austin's Colony. This court had both original and appellate Jurisdiction. In cases of appeal the inferior Alcaldes sat with him. The laws that governed him were few and simple, and "might have been written" says Judge D. "on half a page of fools cap."

Judge Duke was always a friend of Austin and has conferred his name on one of his sons; yet he thinks that his (Austin's) enemies sometimes fared better than his friends.— "Buckner and the Rabbs" said he "were at one time clamorous against him and the conciliated them by extending them favors."

Judge Duke was intimately acquainted with Capt. A. C. Buckner, who he says was a man of fair education and intelligence and of undoubted courage, but his irritability or rather irascibility, was excessive; in illustration of which Judge Duke relates the following anecdotes. "As we were returning home from our visit to the Waco village we traveled nearly all one day without any thing. I was very hungry and after we camped in the evening and before our supper was done cooking, I took a bit of meat out of the pot to appease a little the cravings of hunger. Buckner eyed me sternly, and said testily 'Duke, I wouldn't be a d—d dog.' I made some reply which transported him with anger. He challenged me to fight him on the ground and on the instant—proposing rifles as the arms and ten paces as the distance. I kept my temper and alternately laughed at him and reasoned with him. His choler soon subsided, and by next morning he was as agreeable as usual. He and Joshua Parker were once bringing home a cavallada from the Rio Grande. At their camp one night, Buckner from some trifling cause, became greatly enraged at Parker and challenged him to fight instantly with rifles. Parker, who knew his man, at once agreed to fight him, but as it was quite dark, proposed to postpone the duel until next morning at daylight. Buckner reluctantly assented to the proposal and passed a sleepless night. At the dawn of next morning he rose to prepare for the combat, but found Parker still asleep. Daylight came and Parker still snored on. Buckner became impatient and touching Parker, awoke him. "Come Parker" said he "we are to fight this morning." Parker, after stretching his limbs and yawning said "Buckner, I have been thinking upon this matter and have come to the conclusion that we had better not fight, for if we should both fall what in the h—ll would become of the *cavallada*?" This stroke of humor had the desired effect. Buckner quickly pacified, and the partners resumed their journey perfectly reconciled.

Buckner, like Herbert's Scandinavian "champion" seems to have been—

“mild and kind”

Save when the fury vex'd his mind.”¹

“In the year 1841” said Judge Duke “while I was collector of customs at Paso Cavallo, an old Portuguese sailor lived with me for some time. He told me in substance the following story which I credit.— He had served under Lafitte at Barataria and Galveston but was discharged by him when he broke up his establishment at the latter place. Afterwards he again met with Lafitte at Charleston S. C. Here Lafitte had purchased an interest in a vessel which soon after sailed to the Island of Mugerres where she was laden with dye-woods and sent back to the United States. Lafitte remained in Yucatan and his old Portuguese follower remained with him. Lafitte went from Merida to the Indian village of Celan(?) where he died. His old follower attended him in his last illness and after seeing the remains of his beloved commander interred in the Campo Santo of Merida, went to Honduras. The old sailor did not remember the year of our Lord in which Lafitte’s death happened, but recollected that the passport he obtained at Merida immediately after that event was dated, to use his own words “in the year two.” (Probably 1825 or 1826.)

Austin, says Judge Duke, tried to induce the Tonkewas to cultivate the soil. He gave the chief, Carita, hoes and other farming implements and an ample supply of seed corn and Carita promised that his people should clear land in the Colorado bottom and plant corn. But with this promise he had, probably, no intention to comply. He made bread of the seed corn and after it was all consumed visited Austin and informed him that the Great Spirit had told the Tonkewas not to raise corn but hunt as they had always been accustomed to do, and look to their white friends for the staff of life. Whereupon Austin informed that *he* was inspired to say that the Tonkewas would starve if they did not go to work. The Tonkewas, however, never essayed to till the soil.

Carita, says the Judge, was a very shrewd Indian and quite

¹NOTE.—Captain A. C. Buckner lived and died a bachelor.—He was a Virginian by birth, and emigrated to Texas in 1821, bringing with him a considerable quantity of gun powder which he sold to the settlers at six dollars a pound. These facts are on the authority of Capt. John Ingram—an old friend of Buckner.—[J. H. K.]

sharp at driving a bargain. He was wont to say that if Austin would trade with him he could cheat him out of his Colony.

In the year 1834 or 1835, the Tonkewas, instigated by the Mexicans of Victoria, treacherously assassinated fifteen or twenty of the Carancawas. The Tonkewas went to the camp of the Carancawas, taking with them a small boy who secretly cut the bowstrings of the Carancawas, upon which the Tonkewas fell upon them and murdered all but two or three.

The DeLeons and other Mexicans of Victoria had large stocks of cattle near the coast. They charged the Carancawas (and probably with truth) with stealing their cattle, and one of them resolved to exterminate the Indians by means of poison. The person to whom he applied for the poison, divining his purpose, gave him cream of tartar instead of arsenic. A large quantity of boiled corn was the vehicle of this supposed poison. The savory hominy was charitably distributed to the red men who took it to their camp and ate it. The next morning to the astonishment of the hospitable Don, the Carancawas presented themselves before him and begged for another supply of boiled corn!

In the spring of 1836 the Carancawas could still count twenty five or thirty warriors. When the Mexican army of invasion reached our frontier they joined it and fought against us at the Mission of Refugio in March 1836. They had previously offered to fight for the Americans but their offer was either rejected or neglected.¹

¹NOTE.—In the year 1855 the once formidable tribe of Carancawas had dwindled to six or eight individuals who were residing near San Fernando, State of Tamaulipas, Mexico.—J. H. K.